

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

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*Office Memorandum* • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO :  
THRU :  
FROM :

DATE: 16 January 1958

SUBJECT: The Chinese Aircraft Industry

1. Attached is a suggested Current Support Memorandum entitled, The Chinese Communist Aircraft Industry. This memorandum was prepared by

2. Except for material dealing with AN-2 production at Manchung, this memorandum has been coordinated with the

AN-2 production has been informally discussed with

NSA review completed

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The Chinese Communist Aircraft Industry: Communist China, with Soviet assistance continues to make progress in its efforts to develop an indigenous aircraft industry. Possibly the high point to date was the claim on 1 July 1957 by Po I Po, Vice Premier and head of the National Economic Commission, in his report to the National People's Congress, that the Chinese were mass-producing jet aircraft. While this is not believed to be strictly true, the achievements recorded by the Chinese to date are considered impressive.

Although the following claims are

possibly exaggerated, they do nevertheless reflect progress made by the Chinese Communists: In July 1954, the Chinese claimed completion of their first native built aircraft; 2/ in June 1956, their first turbojet engine; 3/ in September 1956, their first jet aircraft; 4/ and, in August 1957 it was asserted that 11 native produced jet fighters were exhibited at the 30th anniversary of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. 5/

The Chinese aircraft industry is located for the most part in 3 geographical centers, the Mukden (or Shenyang) area, the Sian-Hsingping-Paochi complex, and the Shangrii-Kanchang-Nanking triangle.

Mukden is the probable location of four aircraft plants: Airframe Plant Nos. 112 and 111, and Aero-engine Plant Nos. 410 and 119. Airframe Plant No. 112 is located on the site of a former Japanese Manchurian Aviation Company Plant and is reported to be large and modern installation.

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Either Plant No. 119 or No. 410, in

the Ta Tung sector of Mukden is reported to be producing some 10 turbojet engines per month. 6/ However, it is believed that the activity at this plant is primarily the assembly of Soviet built parts into completed engines.

The Sian area has shown a rapid expansion of facilities capable of participating in the aircraft production program. For this reason it is believed that the Sian complex may eventually be the most

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significant aircraft production center in China. Initially, information received in 1956 indicated Chinese plans to build at least one aircraft plant in the area.

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Also located in Sian is an aeronautical industrial

school that could be used in the training of prospective aircraft technicians.

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it was announced on 24 December that the Chinese Communists had produced a civil transport, the AN-2 (Colt) on a trial basis. 11/ The aircraft, according to an official of the "temporary state commission," passed extensive tests and met state specifications. With the production of this test aircraft in late 1957, it is believed that the Chinese will begin domestic series production of the Colt in early 1958.

There is considerable information to suggest that the Chinese have been engaged in production of the MIG-17 since 1956. Pertinent to this activity is the comment of Po I Po that his country was mass producing jet aircraft. Whereas this is probably ostensibly true, it is estimated that rather than production per se, the activity should be described as

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assembly operations, i.e. the assembly of Soviet manufactured fuselage, wing and tail assemblies, rather than Chinese fabrication of these assemblies. It is believed that the USSR was supplying major MIG-17 components to China, and they are being assembled into completed MIG-17's in a China plant. This conviction is based not on firm intelligence, but rather on an estimate that insufficient time has been available to the Chinese to reach such an advanced stage of technological development. It is thought that the Chinese reached a sufficiently advanced level of technological development to enter actual series production of the MIG-17 by late 1957 at the earliest. Even then the Chinese probably remained dependent upon the USSR for some components and technical support. This dependence should continue for a significant length of time. The series production of the MIG-17 probably takes place at Airframe Plant No. 112 located in the Pei Ling district of Mukden. This plant is believed staffed with Soviet production specialists and Chinese technicians trained in the Soviet Union.

There is now a large bulk of evidence to support the development

of an integrated domestic aircraft industry. What the character of this industry will eventually be is not known although it is believed it will be oriented toward the production of trainer, fighter and transport aircraft designed by the USSR, at least in the early years. It should be pointed out, however, that the Chinese Communist progress toward achieving their goal of a completely integrated aircraft industry will be largely determined by the degree of assistance received from the USSR.

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